

# CHRISTMAS



A good old-fashioned Christmas, with the logs upon the hearth, the table filled with feasters, an' the room a-roar 'th mirth. With the stockings crammed to bustlin', an' the meeders piled 'th snow—

Now that's the thing I'd like to see ag'in afore I die. But Christmas in the city here—it's different, an' why? With the crowded hustle-bustle of the slushy, noisy street, an' the scowl upon the faces of the strangers that you meet.

Oh, there's boyin', plenty of it, of a lot o' gorgeous toys; an' it takes a mint o' money to please modern girls an' boys. Why, I mind the time a jack-knife an' a toffy-lump for me. Made my little heart an' stockin' 'us' chock-full of Christmas glee.

An' there's feastin'. Think o' feedin' with these stuck-up city folk! Why, ye have to speak in whispers, an' ye dar'n't crack a joke. Then remember how the tables looked all crowded with your kin, when you couldn't hear a whistle blow across the merry din!

You see I'm so old-fashioned-like I don't care much for style. An' to eat your Christmas' banquets here I wouldn't go a mile! I'd rather have, like Solomon, a good yard-dinner set. With real old friends than turkey soup with all the nob's you'd get.

There's my next-door neighbor Gurley—fancy how his brows 'ud lift! If I'd holler "Merry Christmas!" Caught, old fellow, Christmas gift!"

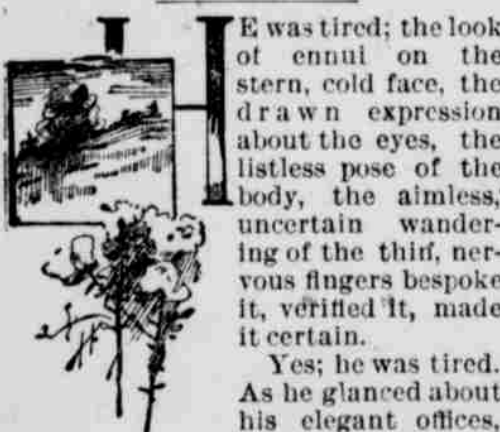
Lardy-Lord, I'd like to try it! Guess he'd nearly have a fit. Hang this city stiffness, anyways, I can't get used to it.

Then your heart is kept a-swellin' till it nearly busts your side. An' by night your jaws were achin' with you smile four inches wide. An' your enemy, like was'tone, you'd just grab his hand, an' say: "Mebbe, both of us was wrong, John. Come, let's shake. It's Christmas Day!"

Mighty little Christmas spirit seems to dwell 'tween city walls. Where each snowflake brings a soot-flake for a brother as it falls! Mighty little Christmas spirit! An' I'm pinin' don't you know? For a good old-fashioned Christmas like we had so long ago—

—Century.

## SOMETHING TANGIBLE.



It was tired; the look of ennui on the stern, cold face, the drawn expression about the eyes, the listless pose of the body, the aimless, uncertain wandering of the third, nervous fingers bespoke it, verified it, made it certain.

Yes; he was tired. As he glanced about his elegant offices, now deserted by the clerks for the New Year's holiday, the suggestion of wealth, power, and high financial standing had no charm to evoke enthusiasm. To Richard Penrith the handsome balance in the ledger, the princely securities locked up in the massive safe, the plump bank account at the great trust institution across the way, were no more at that moment than a heap of dross, a bundle of withered autumn leaves.

One o'clock in the afternoon; the clerks had gone home, and he sat lost in gloomy, profitless, motiveless reverie. Two—he still stared at vacancy, thinking of nothing, of everything; wishing the wheels of business would never stop, feeling as lonely and out of his element in the festive prospects of the next day, as if he was an uncongenial spirit from another world.

Three o'clock.

From the stone-paved court below, there was wafted to his hearing the merry voices of young clerks and messenger boys engaging in the pranks and capers that followed the last "settling up" of the year. The hearty, boyish accents made him wince. How long it seemed since he was a boy! How many years since he put love, emotion, every human sentiment, into a sealed casket, buried it fathoms deep, and became a sordid, money-making machine! With a sigh, bitter and resentful, he put on his hat, hurried from the office, stepped into his handsome carriage at the curb below, and was driven homeward down the magnificent boulevard, one of the richest, certainly the most wretched, of men in all the great city.

The portals of his princely home opened to admit him to luxury and comfort a king might covet. His sister, who directed in domestic affairs and well maintained the social status of the establishment, met him, attired with the elegance of a queen.

"Richard, we shall need you to-night."

He frowned irritably.

"What is it now?" he queried.

"A reception. I expect two generals, an artist, and some of the best

people of our set. Do try and come out of your shell of uncongeniality for once."

"And shrivel in the hypocritical glare of false friendship and hollow pleasure?" he interrupted bitterly. "No, sister. I thank you, but a quiet corner for me. I am tired—I am weary of all this show, vanity and vain labor. Five years a drudge, five more a cynical, flint-hearted money-maker, and what is the recompense?"

His sister stared at him in amazement. The recompense! Was the man going mad? Wealth, social eminence, a proud name! What heights could possibly lay beyond that pinnacle of earthly grandeur and success?

"Excuse me for to-night," pleaded Penrith. "I am tired of it all. Oh, if out of it all I could extract one grain of comfort, one genuine emotion of enjoyment—something akin to the old boyish zest—something tangible!"

Something tangible! He dwelt on the words at the stately dinner table. They lingered with him as he tried to settle down to a quiet smoke in the library. There arose in his mind a picture of the past. It was poverty, obscurity then; but a thought of the bare-footed rambles through the woods, of the real coziness of the little attic-room back at the old homestead, of ambitions tinged with ideal sentiment and glowing hopes, glorified the years now dead.

He glanced from the window at the dying day. Mournful, inexpressible, cold, repellent, unlovely, seemed the wilderness of stately mansions and stiff, precise equipages on the street without. How different the dear old village where he was born! The narrow streets, its quaint homes, its heart-warming people floated across his vision now, and seemed part of another world.

It was not so very far away. That little country town nestling among the hills was only an hour's ride from the great metropolis. Was he getting sentimental? What was this strange impulse that lured him to steal thither like a thief ashamed, and try to warm the frozen currents of his dreary life at the ashes of a dead past?

Ah! the dear old town. How natural it looked! The old red school-house, the rickety depot, the broad common—once again, for the first time in ten years, Richard Penrith trod his native soil that night.

He wandered about the place like an uneasy ghost haunting the scenes of former experiences. He felt a keen pang of actual envy as he peered through the frost-crested windows of the homely village store, and saw its proprietor, happy, serene, all one glow of perfect delight over the gathering in of an extra few dollars for holiday business. Why! a turn of stock in the city often meant a fortune for him, and yet scarcely stirred a nerve!

All heart, all sympathy, all human, simple felicity! What a paradise, compared to the hot-house, superficial life of the city! He paused as a name spoken by a bent, old man, passing with a companion, struck his ear with a shock.

"It's all Miss Naomi's doings, sir. Bless her dear heart! She's nursed my wife back to health, she's got my boy a situation, and we ain't the first that angel of charity has helped."

"Miss Hewitt is a great friend to the poor; yes."

Naomi—Miss Hewitt! Richard Penrith stood stock still on the snowy street. A slight flush mounted his brow, his eyes grew larger, then tender.

Strange how he had forgotten her—stranger still that after all these years the sudden recurrence of that once treasured name could stir his nature as it had not been moved for nearly a decade!

He tried to smile at the memory of their boy and girl love, but failed. Something choked him as he walked on, and paused to peer through the windows of a neat, pretty cottage. Yes, there was the "best room" brightly lighted, and old Mrs. Hewitt seated knitting, surrounded by coziness and warmth. There was the pretty rustic porch. How often he had kissed Naomi good-night under the dew-spangled vines surrounding it. All was the same, only the vines were dead and drooping now. All was the same. His heart gave a great bound as the vivid lamp-light showed a little framed portrait on the wall; his picture as he had been, treasured, esteemed faithfully by the winsome lass he had sacrificed to the cold, cynical demands of gold.

He fell to wondering how Naomi looked now. She was not visible about the house, and he strolled reluctantly on, and passing people stared suspiciously at him. He followed the concourse. Ah, another reminder of the past, the old church, its glowing portals an open welcome to all the weary, and hungered, and penitent.

He entered and glided to an obscure pew. It took him back ten years. How a certain watch-night meeting one New Year's Eve long ago came back to his mind! Naomi was there then, and he was her "company." Why! Naomi was here now! Yes! his heart thrilled as he made her out.

Changed? Yes, as gentle years of sympathy, and purity, and love for fellow mankind change the face of a saint. The glory of perfect womanhood in her kindly beaming eyes made Richard Penrith shrink at a sense of his own callous unworthiness.

Angelic influences were here to-night, surely. The white-haired preacher seemed to appeal to his

heart as to a brother's. He was distressed, awakened, and then a peaceful calm swayed his soul—he hated the things he had loved, he realized the hollowness of the bright bauble he had striven for, holding at its call only bitter dust and flight.

How his heart beat! It must have been dead for years? Now Year's chimes ringing, he stood on the church porch, he timorously advanced to the side of the trim, loving, fond woman he had watched all the evening.

"Naomi—Miss Hewitt, do you not remember me?"

Her face paled, her little hand trembled as he grasped it. Then her soul beamed out in honest welcome, and then—

"They were boy and girl again, 'keeping company,' walking home from watch-meeting as of yore, and the holy stars smiled down.

Richard Penrith bade Naomi Hewitt good-by at the cottage porch only to return the next day.

At evening he returned to the city to be greeted with dismay at his unexplained absence by his sister.

"You have alarmed us, Richard. So unlike you, too. But you look better. I declare! You haven't seemed like your own self for an age. New Year's resolutions, Richard?" she laughed archly.

"Yes," replied the brother, his eyes sparkling. "I have determined to turn over a new leaf."

"Indeed. Give up your cigars—come out in society?"

"As a married man, yes."

"Richard?"

"I mean it, sister," spoke Richard Penrith, solemnly and earnestly. "This New Year's day has taught me to value the true pleasures of life—not wealth, not power, not pride."

"Ah! You have found something else, Richard?"

"Yes," replied Richard Penrith, tenderly. "Back at my boyhood's home, back where Naomi is waiting for me to claim her as my wife, I have found—something tangible—love!"

MARGARET MAHAN.

## CHRISTMAS ON THE FARM.

The Day Should Be One of Joy and Happiness in the Rural Home.

Because the regular routine of chores has to be gone through 365 days a year is no reason why Christmas and other holidays should not be days of gladness and good cheer upon the farm.

Make the same provision the day before, for the lessening the amount of work that must be done, as you do for Sunday; then let it be done up as quickly as possible as thoroughness will allow; and we believe in showing "good will" to even the dumb brutes by giving them an extra allowance of feed, either in quality or quantity—not that we think they have any appreciation of the day of motive that prompts it, but they will appreciate the fact. The work done up, turn about to have just as good a time as possible—a day full of joy and happiness because the pleasure of others is sought more than the gratification of self.

If the home consists of only "wife and I," see that wife has as much attention and "waiting on" as when you were courting her. If there is sleighing the old times can be all the better revived, if not, and the wheeling is not good, just make the day one of the best in which to see your "girl."

If the home nest has birdlings in it, have a romp with these; if the "birdlings" have grown to be "great strapping fellows," show them that father can be a boy with them and have a good time at hunting, trapping, or whatever they choose.

If those who bless your home are fair maidens of "sweet sixteen," or any other age, consult their wishes and tastes as to how the day is to be used. In either of the last three cases be sure the wife and mother is consulted and her wishes put first.

Where there is hired help, have the day a glad one for them, too, whether they wish to seek enjoyment elsewhere or in the home of their employer.

Americans do not take enough holidays. American farmers do not unbend often enough or long enough. Try taking more leisure, begin with New Year's, 1893, and continue at intervals through the year, and see if Christmas '93 does not find you younger and less worn out than Christmas 1892 did.

Last Year's Christmas Gifts.

I wonder where last year's Christmas presents are? A great many of them have gone into the shades of the dust bin, a great many of them are nuisances around houses, a great many of them have been kept to give to somebody else this year. I suppose some of them have been and are religiously kept. Everybody has some little keepsake, often the least costly, that he does not want to part with. Who knows? A little hand has wrapped it in silk paper and tied it with blue ribbon, and the ribbon is around it yet, perhaps the paper, too. There is a little tender note in the packet signed with a little tender name, and it carries indestructibly the whispers of a tender love. The little hand has possibly slapped him since, and rested affectionately before the minister in another's palm; but that little package recalls a lot of sweetness, and in the seclusion of his thoughts, even in the ecstasy of a new love, he says to himself, "If I hadn't found her out!" — San Francisco Chronicle.

"Now, Johnny, you've had a merry Christmas, and you must be good till next Christmas to pay for it." "Oh, yes, of course, be good. I don't believe you can hire me to be good a whole year for a tin horse and a story book just like what Bill Jones was going to trade me for three marbles. Not much!"

A Christmas Toast.

Here's a round to thee, Dan Chaucer, At the festive Christmas time. Pledge me, poets—to the master Of our gentle art of rhyme.

To the eldest of our brothers, To the honor of his name, To the sweetness of his spirit, To the glory of his fame;

To that voice whose music echoes All the centuries along, Prophesying art triumphant In eternity of song.

—Century.

## THE GHOST CHIMES.

FIVE minutes to twelve—less than a quarter of an hour more, and the Christmas ghost chimes will begin to ring!

Nina Beverly stood watching the clock in the cozy sitting-room with an eager, expectant face as she spoke. Her mother anxiously added:

"Dear boys! I am sorry I consented to their going. The storm is rising; it is a dark, dreary walk, and after the trouble about Oscar, I am nervous for them."

Oscar, her nephew, was the one spot of gloom haunting an otherwise bright and glowing Christmas eve.

He had been staying at the Beverly home for some weeks, and he and her boys, Norman and Bob, had got on together like tried brothers.

Three nights previous, however, a youthful escapade among the apple bins in Farmer Drew's barn had led to the capture of Oscar. The irate



"FIVE MINUTES TO TWELVE."

farmer had administered a flogging. The hot-tempered Oscar had rejoined his cousins snarling from the lashes, sullen, resentful, uncommunicative, except to burst out that he would "get even with that old curmudgeon if it took him ten years!"

The next morning, Oscar was found missing. His bed had not been slept in; an open window showed how he had left the house. His mysterious disappearance could be explained in only one way; he shrank from the humiliation of his punishment, and had left for his home surreptitiously.

Oscar had missed a great treat in leaving so abruptly. Norman and Bob had told their mother that afternoon. They and half a dozen boon companions were going up to Hemlock Hill that night to ring the ghost chimes. What an inspiring jaunt poor Oscar had lost through his folly!

The "ghost chimes" were quite an institution with Fairfield boys. Years before a wealthy gentleman had built a church at Hemlock Hill. For a time it was the general place of worship of the district. Then Fairfield became the populated center, new churches nearer home attracted the people, the Hill temple fell into disuse, and then decay, and now, windowless, doorless, a mournful ruin, it was given over to bats and owls.

One Christmas eve, four years ago, the villagers had been startled from midnight sleep by the chimes of the old tower pealing out sweetly the dawn of another Christmas morn. The mysterious ringers were never traced. Boyish gossip discerned a ghostly hand in the occurrence, and since then, at every recurring Christmas eve, it was considered an act of royal daring to visit the distant ruin.

On this venture, Norman, Bob and six doughty companions had departed an hour since, and, with a fond mother's anxiety, Mrs. Beverly and Nina were counting the minutes ticked slowly away by the clock.

Midnight!

Strange! The chimes were not forthcoming, the boys were not on time.

The little group of adventurere had reached the vicinity of Hemlock Hill without accident, in the meantime. "This is the wildest night we ever came here, Bob," remarked Norman. "Whew! that blast cuts like a knife. In with you, boys, to shelter!"

"Who's got the time?" sang out Bob, as he clambered up the ladder. Norman answered from below by flaring a match and examining his timepiece.

"One minute of midnight, Bob," he sang out. "Up with you, boys! Barely on time, we'll ring out a tune to night that will wake up the sleepers."

All gained the second floor. At ejaculation of concern rang from Bob's lips as he groped about blindly. "Boys!" he gasped. "It's no use!"

"Eh?" echoed Norman. "What now?"

"The rope! It ain't here. We can't ring, because it's gone!"

"Ding-dong!"

"Merey!"

There was a scramble for the ladder, and exclamations of affright.

"We've struck it at last!" groaned a hollow voice.

"Struck what?" demanded Bob.

"The ghosts! They're here—the've stolen the rope—they're ringing the chimes themselves—hear them! Oh, my!" panted the affrighted youth.

Whiz—bang! Something went hurtling past Bob's head, and he ducked unceremoniously. From above, too, at that moment, sounded a deep, sepulchral voice.

"Avaunt! get out! get out!"

"Throwing things—talking Shakspeare!" muttered Bob, suspiciously, as his companions basely deserted him for the floor below. "Real ghosts don't do it. I'm coming up after you."

Dauntless Bob grasped the ladder running up in the belfry. Those be-

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A Herald of the Infant Year.

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THERE are more ducks in the Chinese Empire, says an authority, than in all the world outside of it. They are kept by the Celestials on every farm, on the public and private roads, on streets of cities, and on all the lakes, ponds, rivers, streams, and brooks in the country.

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THE January (holiday number) of Godey's Magazine will be one of the finest specimens of periodical literature ever brought out. The frontispiece, printed in two colors, from a water-color painting by W. Granville Smith, illustrating the complete novel, "A Christmas Witch," by Gertrude Atherton, is a feature never before attempted. There are also many and brilliant features in this number. Every book-lover should have this issue of Godey's.

Important to Fleshly People.

We have noticed a page article in the Boston Globe on reducing weight at a very small expense. It will pay our readers to send two-cent stamps for a copy to Betina Circulating Library, 36 E. Washington street, Chicago, Ill.

THERE are a large number of hygienic physicians who claim that disease is always the result of a transgression of Nature's laws. The proprietors of Garfield Tea are both physicians, and have devoted years to teaching the people how to avoid sickness by following Nature's laws. They give away with every package of Garfield Tea, a little book which they claim will enable all persons, if directions are followed, to avoid sickness of all kinds, and to have no need for Garfield Tea or any other medicine.

A GIRL who is vain of her little feet doesn't worry much about the size of her head.—Free Press.

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